

Message Text

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ACTION PER-03

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FOR HOUGHTON PER/CA/FS, MARTHINSEN PER/CA/FS AND DICKMAN
NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: APER, SA

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT FOR ECONOMIC COUNSELOR

REF: (A) JIDDA 0426

(B) STATE 29007

(C) JIDDA 0986

(D) JIDDA 1478

(E) STATE 45665

SUMMARY: ECONOMIC COUNSELOR HAS BEEN ABSENT FROM POST FOR THREE MONTHS. HIS REPLACEMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN NAMED, AND WORK PRESSURES ON THE ECONOMIC SECTION IN JIDDA ARE HIGH AND INCREASING. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT FSO-4 DUANE BUTCHER, BE MADE CHIEF OF THE ECONOMIC SECTION UNTIL HIS DEPARTURE FROM POST IN SUMMER 1976. BUTCHER HAS THE SKILL AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE JOB, AND HAS BEEN DOING IT WELL SINCE BIRD DEPARTURE. IF THIS PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED, BUTCHER AND CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER EBLAN WOULD REPORT CONCURRENTLY TO DCM AND AMBASSADOR, WHILE COORDINATING CLOSELY BETWEEN THEMSELVES. A REPLACEMENT FOR BUTCHER AT THE NUMBER TWO ECON POSITION SHOULD BE FOUND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR DEPARTMENT TO FIND A QUALIFIED REPLACEMENT FOR BIRD/BUTCHER TO ARRIVE NEXT SUMMER WHEN A GREATER NUMBER OF OFFICERS ARE IN MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

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1. ECONOMIC COUNSELOR EUGENE BIRD DEPARTED POST FOR REAS-

SIGNMENT ON JULY 29; BEFORE THEN HE HAD BEEN ABSENT FOR FIVE WEEKS OF ANNUAL LEAVE ON URGENT PERSONAL BUSINESS. DESPITE MAJOR EFFORTS BY THE DEPARTMENT TO FIND A REPLACEMENT AND DESPITE CONSULTATION WITH AMBASSADOR AKINS (REFTELS), NO REPLACEMENT HAS YET BEEN NAMED.

2. AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, THE ECONOMIC WORKLOAD AT THIS EMBASSY HAS BEEN INCREASING FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS. SAUDI ARABIA'S IMPORTANCE TO WORLD ENERGY AND FINANCE DOES NOT NEED EMPHASIZING--BUT THESE ISSUES WILL REQUIRE CONTINUED HEAVY INPUT OF EMBASSY TIME. IN ADDITION, OUR COMMERCIAL SALES EFFORT AND THE NEED TO MAXIMIZE U.S. PARTICIPATION IN SAUDI ARABIA'S \$140 BILLION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STAND NEAR THE TOP OF THE EMBASSY'S LIST OF OBJECTIVES.

AFTER RAMADAN ENDS IN EARLY OCTOBER WE EXPECT THAT BUSINESS VISITORS AND USG ECONOMIC OFFICIALS WILL BE ARRIVING IN RECORD NUMBERS. THE CONTINUED VACANCY AT THE SECTION CHIEF POSITION WILL IMPEDE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR ECONOMIC TASKS.

3. ACCORDINGLY, WE PROPOSE THAT FSO-4 DUANE BUTCHER, NOW THE NUMBER TWO MAN IN THE ECONOMIC SECTION, SERVE OUT HIS TOUR AS CHIEF OF THE ECONOMIC SECTION. FOR APPROXIMATELY THREE MONTHS BUTCHER HAS BEEN FUNCTIONING AS CHIEF OF SECTION AND ACTING COUNSELOR FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. HE HAS THE QUALIFICATIONS--ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE--TO DO THE JOB. TO THE EMBASSY, IT APPEARS AS IF AUTHORITY EXISTS UNDER 3 FAM 143.4 AND 3 FAM 141.3 TO EFFECT SUCH AN INTERNAL SHIFT, BUT WE WOULD LIKE THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS AND CONFIRMATION.

4. IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FROM THE EMBASSY'S POINT OF VIEW IF BUTCHER COULD BE GIVEN THE TITLE OF ECONOMIC COUSELOR ON AN EXCEPTIONAL BASIS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS TOUR.

5. BUTCHER'S APPOINTMENT TO THE NUMBER ONE ECONOMIC POSITION WILL GIVE THE DEPARTMENT MAXIMUM TIME TO FILL THIS VACANCY IN AN ORDERLY WAY, AND TO OBTAIN FOR US THE BEST POSSIBLE CANDIDATE (SEE REF A); THE DEPARTMENT COULD THEREFORE CEASE EFFORTS TO FILL THE JOB ON AN OFF CYCLE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMERGENCY BASIS, AND AIM AT FINDING A GUALIFIED REPLACEMENT FOR EUGENE BIRD/DUANE BUTCHER TO ARRIVE IN MAY OR JUNE OF 1976.

6. THE POST IS EXTREMELY PLEASED AT THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW PRINCIPAL COMMERCIAL OFFICER, MR. JOSEPH EBLAN. IF MR. BUTCHER IS CONFIRMED AS ACTING CHIEF OF THE ECONOMIC SECTION, HE AND MR. EBLAN WOULD REPORT CONCURRENTLY TO THE

DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION AND TO THE AMBASSADOR--WE WOULD EXPECT THEM OF COURSE ALSO TO COORDINATE ECONOMIC MATTERS CLOSELY BETWEEN THEMSELVES. THE VOLUME OF COMMERCIAL WORK IS EXTRAORDINARY. WE BELIEVE IT WILL FULLY OCCUPY MR. EBLAN'S TIME--ESPECIALLY DURING THE NEXT SIX MONTHS OR SO WHILE HE DEVELOPS HIS UNDERSTANDING OF COMMERCIAL WORK IN JIDDA, RIYADH AND DHAHRAN.

7. IT WOULD ALSO BE VERY DESIRABLE IF MR. EBLAN COULD BE GIVEN THE TITLE OF COUNSELOR FOR COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS.

8. IF THIS PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT, WE URGE PERSONNEL TO GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO FINDING A CAPABLE FSO-4 OR FSO-5 TO FILL THE POSITION NOW OCCUPIED BY DUANE BUTCHER. THE JOB MR. BUTCHER WOULD VACATE IS A GOOD ONE, AND IT MAY BE EASIER FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO COME UP ON SHORT NOTICE WITH A WELL QUALIFIED NUMBER TWO MAN THAN FOR AN ABLE, EXPERIENCED CHIEF OF SECTION.
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